

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REFOP

-CD NO

FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

STAT

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFORMATION 1947

SUBJECT Aircraft Industry

HOW

DATE DIST. December 1948

PUBLISHED Monthly periodical

WHERE

NO. OF PAGES 2

**PUBLISHED** Warsaw, Poland

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENT TO

PUBLISHED November 1947

LANGUAGE Polish

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SOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Skrzydłata Polska, No 11 (30), 1947. (FDB Per Abs 72T44  
Information specifically requested.)

## SUMMARY

## ANNIVERSARY OF OUR FRIENDS

### Growth of USSR Aircraft Industry

Lt Col Stanislaw Bobek

The October Revolution freed the Soviet people whose mighty effort in the recent war saved this country from extinction. Many people undervalue the Soviet contribution even as they undervalue the Russian Air Force and its attainments. Yearist Russia did not possess an aircraft industry of its own; it remained for the Soviets to create this industry.

The first Soviet squadrons were used in 1918 against the White Guard and Allied interventionists. Expansion of aircraft construction was not possible until conditions were made ready for it. The Five-Year Plans improved material conditions to the point where this was possible. Such improvement included the development of metallurgy, machine building, construction of engines, aluminum plants, etc.

The Soviet aircraft industry was built not only in European Russia, but in other parts of the country as well. Over 200 production units were erected in the Urals. Plane production continually grew until in 1941 it was 25 times greater than in Tsarist Russia.

The training of personnel was another problem that was overcome by the Soviet. It is enough to say that in 1937 alone 150,000 new pilots were licensed. These new and young fliers gained world-wide renown by the many records they made, and the research they did in the Arctic and Siberian regions (Prokofiyev, Fyedosayenko, Chkalov, Pevdukov, Bivelskov).

In 1935 the extent of the Soviet air lines was 61,000 kilometers, about one and a half times greater than that of the American lines. Before the war these air lines had been extended to 137,000 kilometers. In 1945, the transportation of air passengers and freight had doubled.

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ARMY	X	A	X	AGP	X

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Civil aeronautics plays an important role in Soviet air circles. It serves in emergencies for the transportation of doctors and medicines, fighting fires, supplying agricultural areas with various necessities, etc. During the war, civil aeronautics supplied the front lines with ammunition and other supplies and thus helped to maintain the front. Thousands of German planes were destroyed during the war due to the superiority of the Soviet air arm.

The new Five-Year Plan for 1946-1950 plans a further expansion of aviation. Air freight is expected to reach 500,000 tons by 1950. Air routes will be extended to 178,000 kilometers. Since in the first 3 months of 1946, 8,000 tons of air mail were transported which was more than during the entire period of 1939, it is assumed that the plan will be completed. Moscow alone serves over 1,000 passengers a day; 70 planes leave the city daily. Agreements with other countries will further extend the air lines of the USSR which strive for cooperation with other nations.

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